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What Is Performing

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What is Performing

Performance Senior Thesis

Kara Hess

2008-2009

"GREAT dancers are not GREAT because OF their **technique**; they are *great* BECAUSE OF their...



PASSION."

-MARTHA GRAHAM-

Table of Contents

- Introductory Material
- Journals
- Analysis of Performance
- Dance Perspective Essay
- What is Performing
- Performers Who Catch My Attention
- Analysis of Self as a Performer
- Aesthetic Statement
- Summary of Dance Studies
- Interviews
- Moving to a City
- Resume
- Headshot

Introductory Material:**The Dance I am in:**

"Street"

Choreographer:

Mike Esperanza

Choreographer's Aesthetic:

Lose, free, grounded, organic, technical, hits accents, unique

Intention of the Dance:

Portray the story of the Sharks and Jets from *West Side Story*

Structure of the Dance:

Music: made by Mike Esperanza

Number of Dancers: 14

Length: 9 minutes

My role in the Dance:

Member of the Ensemble and Duet

I played a JET

Strengths and Challenges as a technical dancer I bring to the work as we begin:

- Strong technique is for sure a strength
- Challenge I have is it is hard for me to stay grounded and release my center

Strengths and challenges as a performer that I bring to the work as we begin:

- Confidence
- Ability to create a character

What do I want to learn?

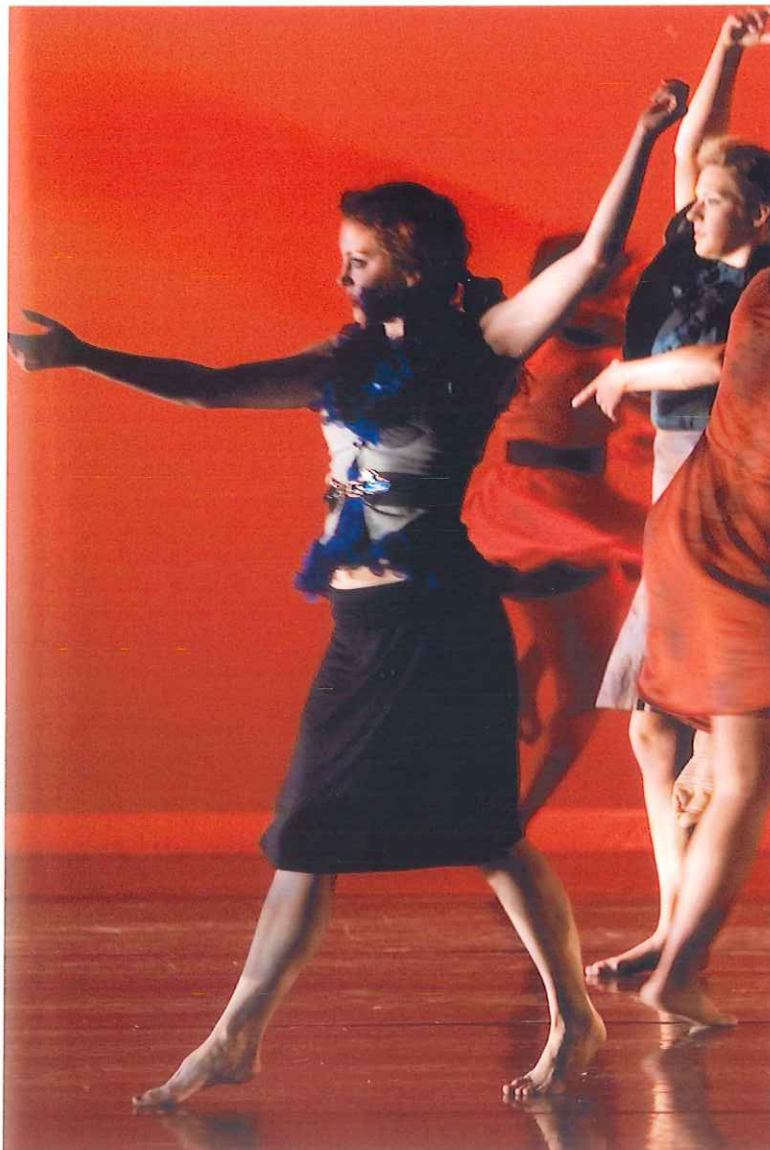
- A new style
- How to let my movement go

What are my goals?

- To learn to let go and allow my body to release in my center
- Pick up choreography
- Develop a character
- Release my center
- Not be afraid to try anything new

What are my fears?

- That I won't be able to do something correctly
- Had never worked on a choreographic piece with Mike before



Weekly Journal Questions

Mike's September 23, 2008

What did I discover?

I discovered that if I came into rehearsal with high energy rehearsal went by fast and my body didn't feel so heavy and hard to move around.

What did I learn?

I learned how to transfer my weight while in a lift between dips and then tilt over partners head.

Where was I frustrated, concerned, overwhelmed?

I was kind of frustrated when Megan and I learned the lift/tango section on the right side and then learned we had to do it on the other side. It was difficult because it felt awkward on the left. It wasn't as natural, but we started to get it.

Where did I come "alive"!

I came alive when all of the jets came together in our huge dance section. I felt the energy. Also, came more alive when the music changed and we started to learn the new tango/partner section.

What questions do I have?

Still am a little questionable on the lift from the tango. The timing is a little off, but it is getting there.

When will I ask those questions? Of whom?

I did ask the question, but the timing kept changing. Next week I will ask more on the specifics of the lift. I will ask the assistants, but if they don't know then I will ask Mike and ask what he wants.

What were the "crits" I received?

I received advice on the movement of my hips during the tango section. I was told to feel like someone was pulling me from my hips instead of moving from my hips.

What are my reflections or responses to those “crits.”

I fully understood what they were asking of me to do. They actually pulled me from my hips and I felt what that movement felt like in my body so I tried to mimic that feeling.

What are my technical challenges and strengths today?

My balance and weight transfer was off. I couldn't figure out where my body had to be in certain parts of the dance.

What are my performance challenges and strengths today?

My challenges were that my body is very stiff and I just am physically and mentally tired which makes it hard for me to move my body to its full mobility. My strength was I started to understand and portray my character.

Mike's October 7, 2008

What did I discover?

I discovered the looseness in my body.

What did I learn?

I learned how to make my movement more sloppy and loose.

Where was I frustrated, concerned, overwhelmed?

I was a little frustrated with learning the lift where I am lifted onto Nicole and Jovan's back. At times I would make it onto their backs and other times I would not. It depended on how the girls who lift me catch me and how Jovan and Nicole's backs are positioned.

Where did I come "alive!"

I came alive when the entire group comes together and dances the ensemble. The energy is strong and present in everyone.

What question do I have?

I have a question on the timing of when Cheryl, Adrian, and I fall into the peoples arms when they catch us before the lift onto the backs.

When will I ask those questions?

I asked them that night, but they are still not quite sure exactly when. We will figure it out once we start to clean.

What were the "crits" I received.

I received "crits" were the counts and where the hands were placed during the dip section of Cheryl and SaraAnne. Megan and I knock back Cheryl and SaraAnne's head and catch them and then tango them backwards. I was holding Cheryl's back and Megan wasn't holding SaraAnne's and I didn't have my hand in the same place on Cheryl's neck. Found out that my hand placement on the back supported the girls more and where Megan had her hand on the neck was good so I just had to change my hand placement onto the neck.

What are my reflections or responses to those “crits.”

I was glad to find that my placement of the arm behind the back helped Megan and SaraAnne with their lift and that the hand placement behind the neck supported and helped Cheryl better.

What are my technical challenges and strengths today.

My technical challenges today are my back. My lower back has been giving me a ton of problems and it has caused me to lose mobility. It becomes very stiff and causes a lot of pain.

What are my performance challenges and strengths today.

My performance strengths was that I started to feel the movement more into my body. I have noticed that each time we run through the dance the movement becomes more and more known to my body.

Mike's October 14, 2008

What did I discover?

That in order to move fast you have to know the movement precisely.

What did I learn?

I learned how to do this leg flip thing on the floor.

Where was I frustrated, concerned, overwhelmed?

I was a little frustrated learning the leg flip thing on the floor because when I did it slow I could do it, but then when the music came on I felt like I did not complete the move correctly. The entire new section the jets do with the music is pretty fast and it was kind of messy since we have not gone over the counts yet.

Where did I come "alive!"

I came alive when the jets snap our fingers and boogie to the side. It reminded me a lot of the movie "*Westside Story*."

What questions do I have?

I have questions on the last section we learned. Counts and specifics had not been set yet so I am a little confused of when to do certain moves.

When will I ask those questions?

I will ask Mike next week since next week we are going to start cleaning.

What were the "crits" I received.

The crits I received

What other reflections I have.

WE FINISHED OUR PIECE TODAY!!!

Mike's October 21, 2008

What did I discover?

I discovered knowing the correct counts help a lot!

What did I learn?

I learned counts and specifics on moves that I did not know before.

Where was I frustrated, concerned, overwhelmed?

I never got frustrated, concerned, or overwhelmed tonight. I just was tired because school has been crazy with midterms and everything.

Where did I come "alive!"

I came alive during the battle part between the sharks and jets.

What questions do I have?

Don't have many questions now since we started cleaning and it has clarified questions I had.

When will I ask those questions?

Whenever they come up!

What were the "crits" I received

I received "crits" on the beginning when Megan and I are partnering. I was told to push Megan and then during my lift to keep my legs tucked and then when they are spread to make them not turned out. Once I did them, Mike was pleased.

What are my reflections or responses to those "crits."

I was fine with these "crits" because I knew that Mike wanted a certain look and I knew that if he told me to fix something and then felt good about how I did them I knew that I am listening to his corrections correctly.

What are my technical challenges and strengths today.

My body is performing better and I am able to move and do things correctly. I have more energy because I was not thinking of school and was able to just focus on rehearsal.

What are my performance challenges and strengths today.

Strength definitely was getting into the mode of my character. I tried not to show any tiredness and playing a character helped me leave my life outside the studio.

Mike October 28, 2008

What did I discover?

That listening to a funny story can brighten your day ☺

What did I learn?

I learned that mishaps during a dance can actually be a plus. I fell during a part where we were supposed to look like we stumble and it actually worked!

Where was I frustrated, concerned, overwhelmed?

I was concerned on the part where the jets intimidate the sharks because we have been going over that part every week and I always am afraid I may be doing something wrong.

Where did I come “alive!”

I came “alive” after I tripped and fell because everyone started laughing and it broke the seriousness.

What questions do I have?

What exactly are we suppose to do with our faces.

When will I ask those questions.

During rehearsal.

What were the “crits” I received.

During the “fight” intimidating part we were told to keep moving and make the first time through slower.

What are my reflections or response to those “crits.”

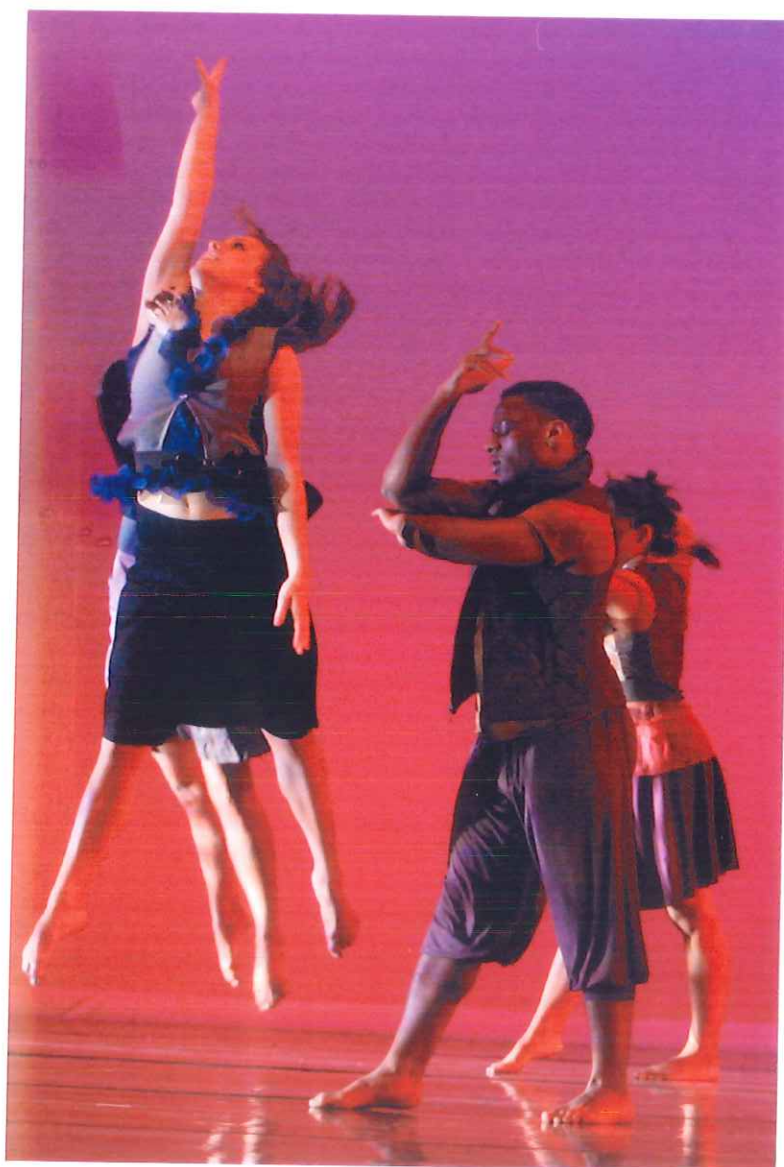
Good to know because otherwise it makes the plot at that part less interesting.

What are my technical challenges and strengths today.

Challenge of when to attack movement and when not too.

What are my performance challenges and strengths today.

I am ready to perform so my character and face is coming out. May be tired altogether, but it is still in me.



Analysis of “*Street*” with Mike Esperanza

1. How did I grow and mature in the work (based on the tape or other nights)?
 - a. Matured by taking risks in things I was unsure about at the beginning of learning the choreography.
2. What do you think I did naturally well?
 - a. My technique was naturally there. It is strong and solid and well noticeable the moment you see me.
3. Where did I need the most work?
 - a. To bring out my crazy and wild side. It takes me a while to settle in and get used to something.
4. What strength do you see in the performance?
 - a. My performance and character was mixed in with everyone else.
5. What challenges?
 - a. I feel I have a hard time letting my center go and staying grounded. Mike said that since I have had such an extensive background in ballet that being lifted is going to be hard for me to break. Mike told me that what would help would be to think back to Holly and Chad’s classes (modern) and think of what they would say to help the class feel grounded.
6. Do you think a casting agent doing a similar piece would ask me for a call-back based on the performance? Why?
 - a. Mike and I agreed this was a weird question because right now there are not a lot of auditions that portray to the style of this piece. Plus, a lot of auditions these days are all about who you know and not necessarily how you dance.
7. General advice-
 - To go out to auditions and just give it my all
 - Get my headshots and resume updated
 - Go to at least one audition before graduation
 - Get to know people more
 - Dress/look the parts for auditions
 - Getting your foot in the door is scary, but once you are in you are in
 - Thinking of rent, how to get around, auditions, etc. can be crazy and it is ok to break down.

Dance Perspectives Essay

Get Up and Move

Perfect balance of Body and Mind is that quality in civilized man which not only gives him superiority over the savage and animal kingdom, but furnishes him with all the physical and mental powers that are indispensable for attaining the goal of Humankind-Health and Happiness- Joseph H. Pilates

Technology has increasingly become a dominant player in people's lives. As a result men, women, teens, and even children have become less active. In order to live a strong and healthy life, people need to move and intentionally exercise in some kind of way. One method to improve the health and wellness of the body is a system called Pilates. Pilates is a form of exercise that balances the mind, body, and soul. Joseph Pilates, a German native, moved to New York and came up with a movement method called Contrology which was later referred to as Pilates. Joseph Pilates defined Contrology "As the science and art of coordinated body-mind-spirit development through natural movements under strict control of the will" (Gallagher, 1999, p. 11). Pilates is a beneficial system of exercise that can be done by dancers and non-dancers.

A system of Pilates exercise helps condition the body in order to prevent injury and assist in rehabilitation when injury has already occurred. Joseph Pilates was inspired to create Pilates because he grew up as a sick child. Despite having asthma, rickets, and rheumatic fever he tried as best he could to keep himself in good health as possible. He participated in activities from yoga to martial arts which helped him turn into a fine athlete. He also was a nurse during the First World War and gave patients exercises by attaching springs to the beds. The springs allowed the patients to use resistance to help strengthen their bodies. This method inspired him to create what became Contrology-Pilates. Contrology-Pilates was merely a new act of exercises.

It was a system that intentionally aimed to use the mind and spirit in coordination with the body to create what is now referred to as wellness.

The success of Pilates is attributed to its ability to incorporate the whole body. A way it does this is through breath. In Pilates, the breath is the basis of movement. The breath helps engage and activate the abdominals and it also helps relieve tension. The significance of breathing is re-enforced by those who practice Laban Movement Analysis. Laban Movement Analysis is the study of human movement expression organized by Rudolph Laban and developed by Irmgard Bartenieff. According to Laban Movement Analysis, one focus of the patterns of total body connectivity is breath. Breath is the first thing taken when brought into the world and it is the last thing taken before dying (Damon Rago, Laban Movement Analysis lecture, Loyola Marymount University, September 2008). Breath creates energy in the body and while the blood is being oxygenated, toxins are released and the body is cleansed. Furthermore, many cultures believe that the breath is a vehicle for spirit (Rolanda Reese, To Dance is Human lecture, November 2008). According to the Pilates instructors at Loyola Marymount University, if no breath is involved while performing Pilates then the exercise is not being done efficiently and the body will not achieve the benefits Pilates has to offer.

Furthermore, Pilates promotes healthy results for the body. Pilates helps with flexibility, strength, and balance while creating long, lean, toned muscle. It also helps restore the bodies' correct posture, alignment, and coordination. Pilates teaches body awareness which improves self-esteem and increases overall health. Blood circulation is stimulated which creates endorphins causing the body to feel good. Back pain can also be relieved by building up strength in the lower abdominals. Pilates can release stress and tension because "practicing focused breathing and concentration during exercise helps to tune out other distractions, producing a

revitalizing effect,” (YMCE, 2004, p. 2). It can also rehabilitate and restore energy in the body. Not only does Pilates increase the body’s overall health, but it also helps athletes, dancers, and people who are in the work place.

Another benefit of Pilates is the understanding of Kinesiology, also known as the study of human movement. Kinesiology focuses on the bodies’ muscles and bones and why the body moves the way it does. Every single body is different and Pilates is a way to help learn and investigate the workings of different bodies. Kinesiology helps one’s understanding of the body which increases the benefits and workings of Pilates. In a Kinesiology course spring of 2008, Loyola Marymount University Professor Yvette Wulff teaches the importance of knowing the body and understanding what the body does. Yvette makes it very clear that understanding and being able to identify the major features and articulations of the bones, muscle locations, and actions is important. She has her students put together a strength and flexibility exercise program. Her main goal is to enhance the individuals’ awareness of the body as a whole instrument which increases the performance quality and reduces the potential risk for injury.

Another significant topic in Pilates is the “mind-body” connection. Mind-body connection is important because it creates body awareness, allows the mind to check into the body and see how it feels, and makes the mind aware of the surrounding space. Sean P. Gallagher (1999), the founder and director of Performing Arts Physical Therapy, states, “Many people are convinced of its existence but do not have the faintest idea of how to explain how the chemical processes of our mind are translated into mechanical movements of the body, and even more astounding, translated into feelings, emotions, and memories. Kinesiology, the physics of the body and kinesthetics, the sixth sense of awareness of the body, may hold the solutions to this phenomena. Not only does the body produce specific chemicals in response to its

movements, but the body also manipulates its movements in order to produce specific chemicals,” (Gallagher, 1999, p. 23). The connection between Pilates and Kinesiology is important because understanding what the body can and cannot do is learned through both of these topics which will promote a healthy body, mind, and spirit.

Moreover, Pilates is excellent for a wide variety of people. It is an exercise option for people who are overweight, personal trainers, athletes, women who are pregnant, people who suffer from stress and back pain, senior citizens, teenagers, and people who are in business. Women who are pregnant should practice Pilates before and after they give birth. Pilates will help them practice their breathing techniques, learn about their body concentration, and help them get back into shape after giving birth. Also, Pilates is safe for senior citizens to participate in because it does not involve heavy weight lifting and it is easy on the joints. Pilates can help senior citizens improve their posture, tone up muscles, and help prevent bone deterioration.

In addition, people in the business world have complex and agitated lives which can cause stress. Stress can cause tiredness and make it hard to focus which can lead to a break down of the body. In business there are two types of personalities. Type “A” people devote a lot of time to work and Type “B” people have a more relaxed lifestyle. Overall, Type “A” people live shorter lives and Type “B” people tend to live longer because of participating in physical and spiritual activities (Draft, Richard L. *Understanding Management 6th Edition*. 2006: South-Western Cengage Learning). For those who put into daily stressful situations Pilates is a way to connect physically and spiritually while relieving stress. (Raul R. Ramirez, Jr., *Principles of Management and Organizational Behavior*, Loyola Marymount University, Fall 2008). Pilates is a universal exercise method working the entire body and is promoted to people of all different lifestyles.

One such group of people that benefits from Pilates is dancers. Dancers exercise a lot, but sometimes when they are exercising they are not always stimulating all of the proper muscles in the body, causing some muscles to become weaker than others. Philip Friedman, a student and Pilates specialist of Joseph Pilates, said, "What is surprising is how many of these injuries are the result of improper conditioning, and how many dancers have unevenly developed bodies and off the stage move awkwardly,"(Friedman, 1980, p. 1-2). Dancers rehearse using the same techniques everyday. If dancers are not taught about specific muscles in the body, then improper conditioning is practiced. William Bales, an artist in the dance industry, has noticed that, "Seventy-five percent of the students who come to me with prior training know only how to do steps. They know nothing about the body or energy or breathing; they know only mechanics and virtuosity," (Friedman, 1980, p.2). Therefore, dancers would benefit from Pilates because it increases flexibility, improves strength, and prevents injury.

Dancer's bodies are put under a lot of stress from jumps and lifting of the legs which can cause harm to the body. If proper technique is practiced and taught, dancers can learn how the body works and how to prevent injury. An injury has a major impact on a dancer's life, but if Pilates is practiced, proper muscles will be strengthened and there will be less injury. As a result, Pilates will rejuvenate, lengthen muscles, and get a dancer's body ready to perform onstage.

Begun in the 1920's, Pilates has been refined and developed by the many practitioners and specialists who have this form of exercise, who have researched its claims, and who have worked as teachers and coaches for a diverse population of human beings. A system that keeps intelligently renewing itself is a healthy system. This is as true for the body itself as it is for this exercise modality known as Pilates. Knowing about the structure and workings of the body

makes one a wise steward of the instrument they drive through life. Pilates teaches one about muscles, bones, circulation and breath, and the vulnerability of each of these bodily functions. Gaining strength, flexibility, muscle, and agility boosts morale and leads to confidence. Pilates work builds this positive frame of mind. Working physically hard, wisely, and safely has the potential to cleanse the body of toxins. Well designed Pilates work allows the participant to engage in this kind of physical method workout. Engaging in exercise which is systematic, sequential, and sensitive to individual needs exerts not only the gifted, the young, or the New Year's resolution crowd, but it is open to diverse groups within the population. Pilates has the potential to create balance and happiness. This is important for healthy active lives in the 21st century.

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What is Performing

Performance is a word with many meanings. How one person defines performing, can be something totally different to someone else. Performance is a chance to share one's development of skills, artistry, and passion. It gives us the chance to live in the moment of experiencing and feed our mind, body, and soul. During a performance, one has the opportunity to risk, challenge, and discover who they are and who they wish to be. Performing is an experience that is never the same twice.

Performing is all around us; you just may not notice it. Every day, people have the opportunity to perform. They wake up, take a shower, get ready for the day, go to work or school, and make dinner, go to bed, and wake up the next morning and do it all over again. How one prepares themselves, distinguishes the outcome of their performance. If one does not perform to their fullest during a job, then either they lose their job, or they do not get paid as much. On the other hand, if a student succeeds and studies hard, then they have the chance to graduate, go to college, and get into a good business. It is a necessity to perform in life because without it, one would never do anything with life.

What defines a performance is the heart and passion behind it. If the movement and performance is not "real," then it really is not a performance at all. The dance Aficionado, Donald Mckayle, described what he looks for in his dancers. He said, "I look for dancers who have a spark and are deeply committed and passionate. Just being a vessel won't do it. Facility can get boring if there is nothing deep behind it. Many young dancers want to achieve a greater level but lack the deep inner voice that guides their choices. They are all distracted by outside limits like 'Oh, if I could get that leg a little bit higher or turn that leg out a little more then I'd be satisfied.' But if that little bit higher adds nothing to the performance, then it's an exercise in

futility,” (*Masters of Movement*, Rose Eichenbaum, Pg. 2). Movement is not all that a performance consists of. A performance takes a story, character, meaning, and the ability to share what is on the mind and in the heart. As a performer, it is important to stay true to yourself. Rely on past stories and your own experiences. Do not try to be someone you are not, unless you are told to portray a character opposite of you. Without any of these elements, a performance is dull. “If you are not real, we (the audience) don’t believe you and the movement is arbitrary. Performance is all about your intention,” (Alex Little, Interview). There has to be a little spice and something special to make a performance spectacular.

Most performers enjoy performing live then any other kind of performance. Mike Esperanza, a choreographer and performer, prefers stage performance because “It captures you as a human being in the moment without all the editing.” Being onstage, is about that exact moment and the experience you share with the audience. Feeling the power of speaking to the audience through the body is huge. “The challenge of breaking the “4th wall” is something I thrive on. I want to converse with people on and off the stage. Doing it without words is such a free form of expression and a challenge I always welcome,” (Alex Little). Dancing for a live audience allows one to share their experience and story with them. The audience is there to join the performer for the ride. The job as a performer is to make sure their ride is enjoyable.

Before, one is able to live on a stage, they have to rehearse. Being a performer takes practice. One works their whole life and trains for hours for the moment to be onstage. To make sure a performance comes out correctly when onstage, while in the studio, one has to pretend they are on a stage performing. If one practices how they perform before they get onstage, the performance will come naturally. The last thing one wants to do when they get onstage is to freeze. But, with practice, a performer can just live and let go.

Another way, a performer prepares for a performance, is through warm-up. Warm-up is a time for the performer to focus on what they need during their performance, get their body moving, and to get in the zone. The rituals and traditions, performers have before, mentally prepares them for the moment they step onto the stage. Mark Meismer's traditions before a performance, is he warms up and does a full barre an hour before the performance, gets into the mind set, says a prayer, goes through the choreography, and focuses on the performance. Alex Little, on the other hand, says a prayer and focuses on the present moment. She tries to let go of her ego, the part that gets nervous about the "steps," and she just prays to be. Mike Esperanza does not really have traditions. He distinguishes there is a difference between on stage and off stage. He has learned to switch back and forth without worrying about anything. He says that it become a mental game if you start to worry and it is the over analyzing that messes with your head more. How one prepares themselves before a performance, defines their outcome.

The experience on stage is what defines a performance. When one is up on stage, their mind goes to another world. It is an outer body experience involving the mind, body, and spirit. It is a chance to experience a new personality and person then they are during daily life. According to Mike Esperanza, "It's like being a little kid and imagining a fantasy world for yourself." If one tries to do something while onstage, it may not happen the way they wanted it to. The best is not to try, but to let go. Letting go allows the body to do what it knows. Moving from intention, an authentic place, allowing the words speak through the body, and just living is the ultimate experience of a performance.

Performing is the chance to live onstage. Pour out ones heart, soul, passion, and story. An audience may not respond to a show in an energetic way, but that does not mean the performer did not do their best. A performer's job is to connect and inspire the audience and if

they only touch one person, they have done their job. “Performance is magnified and hyper-life; amplified movements of energy, time, and space. Through performance and performing we witness the human capabilities of: clarity, grace, intelligence, generosity, passion. Performance allows one to experience our own life forces. Discovering your life force, sharing your life force with others, and learning to give and to receive life force can renew one’s self,” (Handout on Performance by Scott Heinzerling). Performing is an experience that can only be defined by the performer. A performance takes heart and passion. Take that to the stage and ones performances will last forever.

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Performers Who Catch My Attention

Growing up as a dancer since the age of three, I have seen a bunch of performers on and off the stage. I am inspired by performers who have heart, passion, and are able to connect with the audience. A few performers who have caught my eye are Mikhail Baryshnikov, Mark Meismer, and Linda Renstrom. They each have something unique, that is shown, when they are all performing.

I have always been inspired and in awe of the ballet master, Mikhail Baryshnikov. When I was young, and becoming a ballerina, who better to look up to than Mikhail Baryshnikov. I lived and breathed ballet. My mom and teachers told me to watch the movie, *The Turning Point*, and to research the different types of ballet. In the movie, *The Turning Point*, Mikhail Baryshnikov plays a principal dancer and when he performs throughout the movie, his jumps and turns are flawless. He makes everything look effortless, but powerful all at the same time. He uses his plié in such a sufficient way that he is able to fly. Also, he is able to glide across the floor like Fred Astaire except, in ballet shoes. During one of Mikhail's solos, he does a turn sequence and while he is in a back attitude, he swivels down and then rises back up again and balances. I guess that is where my inspiration came from for the attitude turns I am known for. I was fortunate to be able to see Mikhail perform in his company, "The White Oak Project." During the show, he had a solo, and throughout his time onstage, he started to take his clothes off and hang the pieces of discarded clothing onto his body. Mikhail is not the tallest guy, but when he dances, he dances way beyond his height. His movement is very strong and is well noticed when he performs. He dances gracefully, but in a manly way. The attack behind the strength in his jumps is what catches your eye. He is able to move with such ease, that when he travels and plies in and out of the floor, he is strong and aggressive, but he is able to just float around the

space. Dynamics in a performance is what makes a piece interesting to watch. Mikhail's use of movement qualities, effort, strength, and bounce is what makes him such a distinctive performer.

About five years ago, I was introduced to the performer and choreographer, Mark Meismer. His movement is touching, inspiring, and altogether insanely beautiful. I call his movement style, "lyrical in high heels." He has danced and worked with artists such as Celine Dion, Madonna, Britney Spears, Paula Abdul, and Mia Michaels. He has been in shows such as "Scrubs," "Will and Grace," on music award shows, commercials, and in movies such as, "Austin Powers." He is the artistic director for his company, "Evolution," and a master teacher across the country. He is down to earth and is thrilled to share his talent with others who are striving to learn. When Mark performs, his movement is so real that the kinetic mimicry felt while watching him is remarkable. He has such a strong focus, commitment, and projection behind his dancing when he performs. His use of movement is sustained and light, but it appears to also be strong. Mark has the capacity to travel and use a lot of space, but he doesn't have to if he doesn't want too. He could stand still and his movement would still be just as influential because of his presence and dedication behind it. His movement is powerful and honest and when he performs a piece, it is never the same thing twice. He goes into each performance with a new intent and emotion behind it. He just embodies so much passion when he dances that it draws you into the performance. I believe that is what makes him such a fantastic performer is the love, passion, emotion, heart, and art you feel when he dances. A performance without heart is no performance at all, but a performance with heart is.

Another performer, mentor, and choreographer who impacted my view on performance was, Linda Renstrom. Growing up, she studied under Gus Giordano, Luigi, and Bob Fosse. Being from Australia, her movement was Giordano and Fosse with an "aussie" flare. Her

movement was full of strong and attack movements, but she was able to flow in and out of strength and bound movement. In her performances, she was always full of life. The use of her face, spark in her eyes, and body language was intriguing to watch. She always was committed and present in every moment. What was unique about Linda when she performed was how she used and incorporated the music. No matter what, every accent would be hit, which allowed you to hear instruments and notes you have never noticed before. The connection she had with the music, allowed the audience to have a relationship with the music and it made her movement come alive. Whenever a song would come on, Linda would perform right on the spot and the joy would radiate from her face. The character and joy in every one of Linda's performances was what made her so special. The moment she would step onto the stage, your face would just light up and you would know that what you were about to see was going to be beautiful in so many ways.

There are thousands of performers around the world, and in order to stand out, you must have something inside of you that is special. Three performers who have this special spark are Mikhail Baryshnikov, Mark Meismer, and Linda Renstrom. Mikhail brings strength to the stage, Mark brings heart, passion, and emotion, and Linda brings musicality and joy. I love how each of them are complete different artists, but that they bring themselves into their performance instead of trying to be someone else. Since I have looked up to these three performers, I have noticed that when I perform I try to incorporate strength, emotion, heart, and joy whenever I perform. They have touched me as an artist and it is because of these three amazing performers why I love to step onto a stage, underneath the bright lights, and dance in front of an audience.

Analysis of Self as a Performer

Growing up as a dancer, for the past seventeen years, has definitely been a journey. I have been able to study, learn, and grow from renowned teachers and choreographers from across the country. Different stages in my life have played a major role in my growth as a performer. From my childhood, to competitions, talent shows, galas, church performances, football games, and to college, each experience has molded me and transformed me into the performer I am today.

Starting at the age of three, I began to dance at a studio in Minnesota. I absolutely loved going to the studio and I never fought my mom about having to go to dance. In fact, I would always ask my mom if I could go to dance on days my class was not meeting on. I was so excited and eager to learn anything involved with dance. At the age of six, I joined the youngest competition team, which consisted of all 2nd and 3rd graders and I was the only 1st grader. Who knew, that competing, would be apart of my life for the next thirteen years. My years competing, definitely taught me what it takes to be a performer. I learned not to let fear and nerves take over. You have to have confidence and believe in yourself.

My junior and senior year of high school, were the years where I truly grew as a performer. I decided to quit studio and go out on my own and to attend a performing arts conservatory high school. Through this experience, I was able to work with working professionals who were able to teach me the little things of being a performer. Sure, all of my previous years of competing taught me all about stage presence, but my performance started to become deeper and more real to myself. Each time I performed, I would always remember who gave me the talent to dance, which was, God. I would pray and each time I would step onto the

stage, I made sure I would give God thanks during my performance. This experience allowed me to dance from the heart, inspire, and touch the audience.

Growing up a performer, I always thought it was important to have good technique, talent, and training, but through experiences in life, I learned that is not all that is needed to be a good performer. Having strong talent, technique, and training is a plus, but it is what is underneath that matters the most. Heart, passion, and love are major qualities that go into account for creating a performer. If there is no heart behind a performer's performance, the performance seems to be flat and less interesting to watch. When there is heart, the performance becomes alive and it becomes something that is real.

As I have grown older, I have learned life experience creates a stronger performer. Through life, we go through situations that are sad, happy, inspiring, teach us life lessons, etc which morphs us into a stronger person. If a character you have to portray during a performance, is based off an experience you have encountered, your performance will be stronger because you have actually lived the experience. I believe through life experience we learn to grow and understand who we really are. Knowing who we are as a person says a lot in a performance because who you are is what distinguishes you from someone else. To be a performer, it takes a lot of courage. A performer cannot be afraid or timid. The dance world is harsh and you cannot let one disappointment get in the way of doing what you love. Through Life experience, a performer can gain that courage.

A fear, I have had my entire life, is making a mistake. I have always tried to be perfect even though, I know, perfection is something non existent. When I came to Loyola Marymount, I was trying so hard to do things correctly while in class. It would stress me out and cause me to

get frustrated at myself. Having a negative attitude about yourself does not help you whatsoever. It hindered my learning and the potential I have as a dancer. During, all of my conferences first semester, every dance professor told me that it was ok for me to mistake. It was a relief to hear all of them say that, but I still felt that if I did not try to get things perfectly, it would look like I was slacking off. I have learned to make mistakes, but to use those mistakes and learn from them. I still have a hard time to get it out of my head that I do not have to be perfect. No one is perfect, so why try and be perfect. When I think of just dancing and not to worry about the steps, or if I am doing something correctly, the movement is more enjoyable. I always have to tell myself to not worry about what I am doing because the technique will come naturally. If the mind has too much clutter in it, it can inhibit your performance. Clear the mind, let go, and the movement will just come.

In my experience, with the faculty concert, this fall at LMU, I explored movement my body was not necessarily familiar with. I pushed my limits and tried to let go. A strength I have as a performer is my technique. You can tell I have strong technique when you see me and that is a plus when working with any dancer. Also, I am able to create a character that blends in with the other dancers in a piece. Challenges I have are letting my center go and staying grounded. All of the ballet, when I was younger, taught me to be lifted, which inhibits the movement in my center. This year, I have been focusing on letting my center go by incorporating my breath. I have noticed that when I use my breath, it releases my muscles, allowing me to release my center. My movement becomes a lot larger and there are a lot more artistic decisions I can make when my body is relaxed. The release, in my center, also allows me to stay grounded because my pelvis is able to drop. It has been a journey trying to figure this all out and my body is still getting used to it. It will take awhile to fully get used to it because the technique I learned in the

past, is not going to go away. My ballet will always be there. Through the exploration of movement in my body and letting go, I feel my movement will grow with the more experience and practice I get.

As I leave Loyola Marymount University, I hope to take what I have learned as a performer, not only about myself, but also as a performer in general, with me as I keep pursuing my dream of being a performer. My experiences in life will continue to grow allowing my performance to develop even more. I plan on letting my heart, passion, and God given talent to continue to inspire audiences and people all over. I will keep an open mind and let the movement speak for itself. But, no matter what, I will continue to practice my performance and challenge myself at all times. A performance is a time to do what you love so others can enjoy. I will take what I have learned as a performer with me and I hope that through that, who I am, as a performer, will take me to the stage, screen, ad, or anywhere life takes me. We all perform each day. We all wake up, go to school or work, make dinner, spend time with family and friends, and sleep. I hope to learn from each learning experience and allow the performer in me continue to mature.



Aesthetic Statement

Throughout life, I have gone back and forth about what makes something beautiful, what is beautiful, and how does one define beautiful? Growing up, watching a variety of performances, I have found that what makes something “beautiful” to me is when the performer brings something real to the performance. I do not care for a performer who stays internal and just dances for themselves. I find it enjoyable when the dancer is able to create an emotion and share a story with the audience. I believe the mission during a performance is for the dancer to give and for the audience to receive. If the dancer is able to touch and inspire just one person in the audience, then they have done their job. I appreciate it when a performer puts their entire heart and soul on the stage. If I can feel and see the heart in the performance, then I find it to be truly “beautiful.”

When I was younger, my aesthetic was anything that had to do with ballet. I found the movement to be graceful, “princess-like,” and very feminine. My movement was very lifted and hardly ever had to deal with dancing low. When I would watch ballet, I liked how the bodies were elongated and when they would move across the floor, they looked like they were floating. As I have aged, my aesthetic has changed because my dance vocabulary has grown. Today, my aesthetic falls into the contemporary, lyrical, jazz realm. I tend to move using movement that is free, technical, and light incorporated with attack at times. My dance vocabulary has grown through the immense amount of dance teachers I have encountered the past eighteen years of my life.

A teacher, choreographer, and performer who has changed my aesthetic was Linda Renstrom. Linda’s aesthetic was showy, strong, and had a lot of musicality to it. She studied with the founders of jazz and performed across the U.S. and in Australia. Linda is the one who

taught me how to attack movement and use my plié to explore level changes. When I first met Linda, I was a ballerina, but after studying with her, I became a jazz and a musical theater dancer. She taught me the true heart behind dance, the importance of music, and most importantly, she shaped me to be the performer I am today.

Music plays a very important role in my aesthetic. Linda Renstrom taught me a lot about music and how it can affect you as a performer. Music is what intrigues me to move and it helps portray the story behind my movement. The music I typically use incorporates a powerful instrumental background mixed with a song that has meaningful lyrics. Whenever I hear a song, it touches me in some sort of way and I am able to relate it to a past experience or an emotion I am feeling at that time. I always tend to find a song and let the song move me instead of allowing the movement help me find a song. If a powerful song comes on, like a song by Celine Dion, I cannot help, but get up and dance and let my emotions run free.

Of the diverse culture of dance, the professional work that best represents my highest ideals is musical theater, contemporary, any form of the Latin genre, and commercial jazz. I am drawn to musical theater because I love the performance aspect behind it. The movement in musical theater incorporates singing, dancing, and music and tells a story through these three elements. Musical theater allows the audience to experience some of our favorite stories in a live setting. Whenever I think of musical theater, I think of Broadway, the bright lights, and the theaters in New York City. Dancing on Broadway has always been a dream of mine. If I had the opportunity to go back in time, I wish I could go back and perform in "A Chorus Line" on Broadway along side Mikhail Baryshnikov.

As years pass, and I am introduced to new choreographers, my aesthetic will continue to grow and change. My aesthetics from the past are still apart of me, yet I add new elements from other styles as I learn them. My aesthetic is what separates me from other dancers. I find that no matter what your aesthetic may be, if you have no heart and passion behind it, then it is not “beautiful.” As the dance vocabulary grows and changes, I cannot wait to see where it takes my aesthetic to go in the future.

Summary of Dance Studies

Fundamentals of Dance Composition 1:

- We learned how to improvise dance movements while using playfulness, imagination, purpose, and direction.
- We learned how to compose and perform dance studies whether it was working in a group, as a duet, or as a solo. We showed participation during our coaching sessions and our presentation in front of our peers during showing times.
- We learned how to speak, read, and write about dance through watching our peers perform which allowed us to understand, apply, and analyze the elements of dance making us become a more active, alert, thinking, and responsive audience member.
- We learned how to integrate lessons from this course with our life outside of this class. We found connections between other dance courses and our academic studies.

Fundamentals of Dance Composition II:

- We learned how to create movement to haiku poems we wrote ourselves or poems we found that we liked. The movement either was literal to the words or we used the rhythm of the poem as a base for our movement.
- We worked on solo studies with random music that was given to us. This taught us how to create a story and a character through movement and the music used.
- For our final projects we chose to study an element of dance. I chose to study energy. I got to explore energy through my own experiences, places around me, videos, images, and objects.

Dance History:

- We focused on the ways in which dance is historicized by looking at the how's, why's, and what's. We considered how and why we watch dance and why certain movements occurred throughout the course of dance history.
- We looked at the political, social, gendered, anthropological, sexual, technical, and historical constructions around and within Western dance so that we were not merely watching dance, but engaging, participating, and understanding practice.
- We went to dance performances and had to use what we learned throughout the course to write about the movement and where that movement or style came from.

Kinesiology II:

- We learned to identify and understand the major bones, muscles of the human body, joint structure, and terminology used in the description and analysis of movement as it relates to dance.
- We practiced correct alignment and safe conditioning exercises which provided strength, endurance, flexibility, and coordination and awareness of the muscles lowering the potential risk for injury.
- We demonstrated the knowledge and analysis of muscle imbalances and injuries common in dancers and how to identify and practice conditioning techniques for rehabilitation and prevention of injury.
- We put together our own strength, flexibility, and endurance program. This made us investigate what we thought our own bodies needed to help them be in good shape for what the stress of dance and life puts on us.

Principles of Teaching:

- We learned the content standards for teaching in California K-12 schools, and the basic principles and techniques of teaching dance not just in schools, but in private studios and agencies as well.
- We created dance lessons that covered technique, choreography, improvisation, history, and culture. We had to follow the steps and make sure we met the California standards.
- We learned how to put together a resume whether it was for a performance job or a teaching job. We also were taught and put together teaching philosophies which will help when applying for a teaching job.

Drumming/Music for Dance:

- We are learning the proper hand placement on the drums which allows us to produce different sound qualities.
- We are learning how to reproduce the patterns and techniques shown to us while learning different rhythms from various African folkloric traditions.
- We are learning about the different drums and which rhythmic patterns are played on each one.
- We are expanding our knowledge of keeping time, the overall pattern of time, and the many forms of subdividing time.
- We are learning to use our voices as instruments too while singing the accompanying songs that go along with the rhythmic patterns.

Laban Movement Analysis:

- We are learning about the different body patterns of the total body connectivity. The six patterns are breath, core/distal, head/tail, upper/lower, body half, and cross lateral.
- We have been focusing on our breath and how it helps initiate movement and how it makes movement look richer.
- Using observation and our journals we have been able to explain things deeper with use of more dance vocabulary verbally and analytically.
- We are working on a conceptual, theoretical, practical, and analytical understanding of effort, shape, and space.

To Dance is Human: Dance, Culture, and Society:

- We have been learning the importance of stories and how telling and hearing stories can impact our lives.
- We have been defining what defines dance and what it means to be human.
- We are learning vocabulary learned in dance science, dance composition, dance history, and music as it relates to dance.
- We are learning to understand that experience and knowledge are somehow connected to our “lives” now. This makes that what we learn cognitively and what we experience physically and emotionally hooks into deep places in the body mind.
- We are making baskets that share our own stories and cultures.

Ballet:

- We focused a lot on the musicality, coordination, grounding, and core initiation.
- We used a lot of imagery, positive thinking, breath and touch which helped us explore dynamic alignment and the connection between mind and body.
- We have been meditating before class to release our minds of things outside the studio. It not only prepares us for class, but it relaxes your body and lets you be aware of what your body needs.
- We worked on focusing our energy to move all the way to our distal ends of our body. Through our fingertips, toes, and head.
- We improved our ability to learn, analyze, and execute a continually expanding vocabulary of steps in a more complex way.
- We focused a lot on our centers and the facings of our bodies. We started at the barre, but to increase difficulty we did a unit of just center barre.
- We increased our use of ballet terminology.

- We learned how to count and teach ballet combinations to the class and to the piano player.

Jazz:

- We learned how to pick up combinations at a fast pace which is needed in the commercial world because at auditions they teach combinations fast and expect you to pick it up.
- We worked on our strength and flexibility by focusing on exercises that helped core, arm, leg, and upper body strength while lengthening our muscles.
- We learned how to spell, pronounce, and the meaning of dance terminology.
- We got comfortable with the way our bodies looked by wearing clothing that showed us more of our body which helped us understand placement and alignment.
- We worked on improving and dancing in front of a camera which gave us an understanding of working in the professional world of dance.

Modern:

- We learned and practiced the Bartenieff Fundamental Patterns of Total Body Connectivity which includes breath, core-distal connectivity, head-tail connectivity, upper-lower connectivity, body-half connectivity, and cross-lateral connectivity.
- We focused on using the body as a tool for the exploration of effort, space, and shape.
- We focused on contracting and using every inch of our spine.
- We learned how to use our weight in and out of the floor which made it look effortless while finding ways to fall into the floor and back to standing.
- We focused on spreading our energy wide and connecting each movement while moving freely.

Pilates:

- I focused on my breath to help engage my core and give my muscles more oxygen during all the exercises.
- I learned how to strengthen my inner and outer rotators. I had to perform one exercise everyday which helped me perform better in all of my technique classes.
- I focused on not gripping in my quads when performing my exercises. This caused me to activate other muscles throughout my body.
- I learned how to relieve stress and other toxins in my body by applying pressure on pressure points in the body.
- Overall, I got a clearer understanding of my body and what my body is capable of doing and I learned how to prevent and how to rehabilitate from injury.

Yoga for Dancers:

- We learned how to connect the body in peace by connecting the inner mind with its external environment, by infusing the artist and the human, and by binding the intelligence of breath to every action in daily life.
- We learned postures to tone the body and condition the nervous system.
- We learned what postures are beneficial for our own bodies, how to relieve bad tension or anything inhibiting the body.

Stagecraft:

- We learned how to communicate with technical experts in the language of particular technical fields.
- Developed an appreciation for the technical artists who develop every performance.
- Learned about light sources, lighting, sound boards, different stages, and different ways to tie knots.
- Learned how to tech a live performance.

Styles and Forms:

- Learned the process of choreographing.
- Learned how to use compositional devices.
- Learned the importance of understanding the background of music.
- Learned how to choreograph as a soloist, as a duet, in groups.
- Learned different ways to help the choreographic process.
- Learned how to use text, chance procedures, and random music to create.

Dance of Africa:

- Learned how to drum on the D'jembe.
- Learned the physicality it takes to dance African.
- Learned and performed songs and the dances that went a long with them.

ALEX LITTLE

1. What kinds of performing have you done?

Let me think- well, I performed on a couple TV show- but they didn't get picked up to air, but technically yes. Stage- lots of stage. International tours, school outreach programs, industrials, conventions, product advertisements (not for TV) but on-site. Auditioned for a cruise company- but haven't taken them up on the experience (yet...)

2. Which kind of performing do you prefer and why?

My favorite is live stage- no question. There is nothing like being in front of an audience- feeling the power of trying to speak to them through my body- telling stories through movement. The challenge of breaking the "4th wall" is something I thrive on. I want to converse with people- on and off stage. Doing it without words is such a free form of expression and a challenge I always welcome. It humbles me to have the opportunity to live on stage- even if just for 3 minutes.

3. When, why and how did you know you wanted to be and stay a performer?

Maybe the first taste I had.... at age 7... because it was fun. So I wanted to do it more... and every year I added more classes... and long story short, I was on stage more and more. The feeling was addictive. By age 11 or 12 I was able to get my "fix" doing many competitions, conventions, recitals, local fairs, etc... And it was quickly becoming my passion- I set goals, I looked up to older dancers & teachers, I went to many professional ballet and Broadway productions. I wanted to be "them". All of "them". It made me want to work harder, progress, find myself. When I was 13, I went through a very difficult challenge in my life. Dance was my way of healing. Of expressing and working through my pain, fear, hopelessness, etc- so, it wasn't only fun, it was therapeutic. That has continued-

I followed my heart to LA at age 18- and the rest is history!!!! I joined The Young Americans, trained in LA, auditioned, did shows, industrials, etc... Then started into the other side too (teaching & choreographing!)...

4. What is the worst aspect about performing?

INJURIES. This can keep anyone from performing, training, moving, etc.... For me, this is my nemesis. It is hard in our profession- because we are used to pain and our threshold for pain is not normal... to a point where we may not know that something is really "going on". At least this is true for me. We push through it. Injuries can be a great learning opportunity, however. Every "not favorable" thing that can happen to you as a professional artist can be a time to learn. Artists thrive on our craft and passion- and many times it can be fleeting. Jobs don't always come your way. But one job can bring so much joy, it is worth it. More than that, though, training and taking class is the never ending university we get to be a part of- and that is the most precious part. JUST LISTEN

TO YOUR BODY- DO WHAT YOU CAN TO KEEP IT HEALTHY... it is your instrument.

5. What words of advice would you give anyone aspiring to perform?

As a performer- BE YOU. Rely on your stories. Rely on your experience. Use your vulnerable-self, your true self- to talk to the audience. If you try to be someone you are not or tell a story you have no connection to... then wait till you can find some aspect you can feel a part of (UNLESS you are doing a character/acting piece where you may need to access someone you are not... and I would challenge to still bring a piece of YOU to it). We (the spectator can see through it- if you are not real. We don't believe you and the movement is just arbitrary- if your heart is not a part). Performance is all about your intention. YOUR OWN INTENTION. You are an authentic artist.

6. Where does your mind go when you are performing?

My mind goes to my heart- To my intention- to my story- to the power of speaking through my body. If I TRY to entertain, I may not succeed. If I let go and do my job- move from intention and from an authentic place- then I will entertain the best I possibly can.

7. What are your rituals/traditions before a performance?

Prayer. Focusing on the present moment. The intention. I try to let go of my ego- the part of me that gets nervous about the "steps". I pray to just be.

8. If you make a mistake while performing how do you recover?

KEEP GOING. No one is perfect. I have made many embarrassing mistakes the 2 most embarrassing moments in my life happened on stage- in big shows- front and center. Oh-wow!!! They were crazy! In the past, I have let it affect me during the rest of the piece- and that makes it even worse! Cursing myself takes me out of the moment! Now I just try to let it go- laugh at myself- I am human. We all are.

9. Does the choreography while performing relate to your life experiences?

ABSOLUTELY it may not be *exactly* my story, or it may not even be close to an experience of mine... BUT no matter what, we all can identify with some part- a feeling or word at the very least.. I need that- to do my job. Dance rarely has no meaning- unless a choreographer asks for vacancy- BUT I would argue that is still a feeling/story/experience. :o)

10. Does the crowd's reaction affect how you feel? Like if you feel you did a good job, but the audience doesn't portray that does it effect how you thought you did?

That's a great question. It took me some time, but I finally realized that ANY reaction is perfectly fine- and I feel I have been heard... whether the "message" is liked or disliked, that is irrelevant. Did they get the exact message- this is also irrelevant. Sometimes they will "get it" sometimes not- but if they get something or feel something (good or bad), my job is done. And I cannot expect to reach everyone. It also depends on how open/deep/invested the audience member is. I find an audience will often channel what they receive in their own personal way- so I cannot control how they perceive it. All I can control is the authenticity, commitment and storytelling of my performance.... and if I put my best foot forward, then I am happy. And then the whip cream and cherry on top is if there is a reaction, conversation, feeling from the audience. That is the ultimate.

Mike Esperanza

1. What kinds of performing have you done (stage, cruise ship, TV, etc.)?
Just local company stuff. All stage.
2. Which kind of performing do you prefer and why?
I prefer stage performances because it captures you as human being in the moment without all the editing.
3. When, why, and how did you know you wanted to be and stay a performer?
People/strangers/teacher would come up to me and tell me how much they loved watching me perform. I was never the fit guy so I relied on communicating and making myself accessible to other dancers on stage or the audience. I can't dance like I used to but I think there are many ways of letting the viewer into your emotions/visions.
4. What is the worst aspect about performing?
Aiming for perfection. There's no such thing.
5. What words of advice would you give anyone aspiring to perform?
Performers have to forget the nit picky stuff and let yourself be human.
6. Where does your mind go when you are performing?
I give myself a different personality. A different environment from where I usually am. It's like being a little kid and imagining a fantasy world for yourself.
7. What are your rituals/traditions before a performance?
Nothing really. Off stage is one thing and on stage is another. I've learned to switch back and forth without worrying about anything. It becomes a mental game if you do. It's over analyzing things that screws with your head more.
8. If you make a mistake while performing how do you recover?
You say "shit" in your head for a sec and you move on.
9. Does the crowd's reaction affect how you feel? Like if you feel you did a good job, but the audience doesn't portray that does it effect how you thought you did?
Nah... I have to be proud of myself first. The crowd is there to witness your journey not to affirm your talent.

Mark Meismer

1. What kinds of performing have you done?
Stage, film, movies, concert dance....all of it
2. Which kind of performing do you prefer and why?
Live stage. Concert dance with Mia Michaels was the best experience. I like it because of the joy of the audience.
3. When, why, and how did you know you wanted to be and stay a performer?
Nothing like being onstage. Being able to do what you love. Touch people. From your heart.
4. What is the worst aspect about performing?
Inconsistent money and what it takes on your body.
5. What words of advice would you give anyone aspiring to perform?
Train, stay in class, be as best as you can be, follow your heart.
6. Where does your mind go when you are performing?
Another place, outer body experience...body/mind/spirit. Depends on the character I get into.
7. What are your rituals/traditions before a performance?
Full ballet barre, mind set, say a prayer, 1 hour before performance warm-up, go through the choreography, focus on performance.
8. If you make a mistake while performing how do you recover?
Try not to make a mistake. I don't really make mistakes. But, if I do I go on like nothing ever happened.
9. Does the choreography while performing relate to your life experiences?
Depends on a piece I am doing. Sometimes yes and sometimes no. Create character.
10. Does the crowd's reaction affect how you feel? Like if you feel you did a good job, but the audience doesn't portray that does it effect how you thought you did?
Yes, but I am so into the performance it doesn't matter. If you touch one person you have done your job. Most people respond to entertainment well.

Moving to a City: Los Angeles, California

Housing:

If moving to the LA area to dance, I suggest living in the Burbank/Studio City/Laurel Cannon/Serman Oaks area

Laurel Canyon II Apartments

5807 Laurel Canyon Boulevard Valley Village, CA 91607

Archstone Studio City

10979 Bluffsides Drive Studio City, CA 91604

Morrison Apartments

11265 Morrison Street North Hollywood, CA 91601

Avalon at Media Center

401 N. Pass Avenue Burbank, CA 91505

The Plaza at Sherman Oaks

4500 Woodman Avenue Sherman Oaks, CA 91423

Burbank Village

12244 Burbank Boulevard Valley Village, CA 91607

1725 Grismer Avenue

1725 Grismer Avenue Burbank, CA 91504

Theaters/Studios:

<http://www.los-angeles-theatre.com/>

<http://www.at-la.com/>

The EDGE Performing Arts Center

1020 Cole Ave, 4th Floor, Hollywood, CA 90038

<http://www.edgepac.com/>

Millennium Dance Complex

5113 Lankershim Blvd.

North Hollywood, CA 91601

<http://millenniumdancecomplex.com/>

Debbie Reynolds Dance Studio

6514 Lankershim Blvd

North Hollywood, CA 91606